

**ASSEMBLY, No. 3664**

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**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

**219th LEGISLATURE**

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INTRODUCED MARCH 16, 2020

**Sponsored by:**

**Assemblywoman VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE**

**District 37 (Bergen)**

**Assemblywoman LINDA S. CARTER**

**District 22 (Middlesex, Somerset and Union)**

**Assemblywoman JEAN STANFIELD**

**District 8 (Atlantic, Burlington and Camden)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

**Assemblyman S.Kean**

**SYNOPSIS**

Authorizes grants to purchase and rehabilitate abandoned homes for homeless veterans.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 11/8/2021)**

1 AN ACT authorizing grants to purchase and rehabilitate abandoned  
2 homes for homeless veterans and amending P.L.2017, c.258.

3  
4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*  
5 *of New Jersey:*

6  
7 1. Section 2 of P.L.2017, c.258 (C.52:27D-517) is amended to  
8 read as follows:

9 2. As used in this act:

10 "Director" means the Director of the Division of Housing and  
11 Community Resources in the Department of Community Affairs.

12 **["Disabled"]** "Disability" means **[a person who fulfills the**  
13 **definition of having a "disability"]** the same as that term is defined  
14 pursuant to section 3 of the "Americans with Disabilities Act of  
15 1990," 42 U.S.C. s.12102.

16 "Division" means the Division of Housing and Community  
17 Resources in the Department of Community Affairs.

18 "Eligible veteran" means a **[disabled or low-income]** veteran  
19 who is low-income or has a disability, or both.

20 "Energy efficient features or equipment" means features or  
21 equipment within a primary residence that help to reduce the  
22 amount of electricity used to heat, cool, or ventilate the residence,  
23 including but not limited to insulation, weatherstripping, air sealing,  
24 repaired heating systems, or duct sealing.

25 "Family member" means a spouse, child, parent, sibling, aunt,  
26 uncle, niece, nephew, first cousin, grandparent, grandchild, father-  
27 in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, stepparent,  
28 stepchild, stepbrother, stepsister, half brother, or half sister, whether  
29 the individual is related by blood, marriage, or adoption.

30 "Homeless veteran" means a veteran who is living outside, or in  
31 a building not meant for human habitation or which the veteran has  
32 no legal right to occupy, in an emergency shelter, or in a temporary  
33 housing program which may include a transitional and supportive  
34 housing program if habitation time limits exist, or temporarily in  
35 the home of another household, or in a motel.

36 "Low-income veteran" means a veteran occupying a household  
37 with a gross household income equal to 50 percent or less of the  
38 median gross household income for households of the same size,  
39 and within the same housing region, as defined by subsection b. of  
40 section 4 of P.L.1985, c.222 (C.52:27D-304).

41 "Primary residence" means a dwelling unit that is owned by the  
42 eligible veteran or by a family member of the eligible veteran, and  
43 occupied by the eligible veteran as his or her principal residence.

44 "Qualified organization" means a nonprofit veterans'  
45 organization that qualifies as a section 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(19) tax  
46 exempt organization under the Internal Revenue Code.

**EXPLANATION** – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is  
not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1       "Rehabilitation" means the repair, renovation, alteration, or  
2       reconstruction of any building or structure.

3       "Veteran" means any resident of the State who has been  
4       honorably discharged or released under honorable circumstances  
5       from active service in any branch of the armed forces of the United  
6       States, or any honorably discharged member of the American  
7       Merchant Marine who served during World War II and is declared  
8       by the United States Department of Defense to be eligible for  
9       federal veterans' benefits.

10      (cf: P.L.2017, c.258, s.2)

11  
12      2. Section 3 of P.L.2017, c.258 (C.52:27D-518) is amended to  
13      read as follows:

14      3. The director shall establish a pilot program to award grants  
15      to qualified organizations to rehabilitate **【and modify】** the primary  
16      residences of eligible veterans, and to purchase and rehabilitate  
17      abandoned homes for occupancy by homeless veterans. The  
18      director shall manage the pilot program in consultation with the  
19      Adjutant General of the Department of Military and Veterans'  
20      Affairs to most effectively advance the needs of eligible veterans.  
21      The director shall administer the pilot program for five years  
22      following the operative date of P.L.2017, c.258 (C.52:27D-516 et  
23      seq.). Grant awards totaling \$1 million shall be awarded during  
24      each year the pilot program is in operation.

25      a. In addition to any additional information required by the  
26      director, a qualified organization seeking a grant under the pilot  
27      program shall submit an application to the division that shall  
28      include the following information:

29      (1) the approximate number of veterans the qualified  
30      organization has the capacity to serve through grant funding; and

31      (2) a description of the type of work to be completed, such as  
32      interior home modifications, energy efficiency improvements, and  
33      other similar categories of work.

34      b. In order to receive a grant award under the pilot program, a  
35      qualified organization shall:

36      (1) demonstrate expertise in providing housing rehabilitation  
37      **【and modification】** services for the purpose of making homes  
38      accessible, functional, and safe;

39      (2) have experience in successfully carrying out accountability  
40      and reporting requirements involved in the proper administration of  
41      grant funds; and

42      (3) commit to paying workers employed through the pilot  
43      program no less than the prevailing wage rate for the worker's craft  
44      or trade, as determined by the Commissioner of Labor and  
45      Workforce Development pursuant to P.L.1963, c.150 (C.34:11-  
46      56.25 et seq.).

47      c. In awarding grants under the pilot program,

1       (1) the director shall give preference to:

2       (a) qualified organizations that employ workers from an  
3       apprenticeable trade participating in the Helmets to Hardhats  
4       Program, as certified by the New Jersey State Building and  
5       Construction Trades Council, such that not less than five percent of  
6       projected labor hours shall be completed by such participating  
7       organizations; and

8       (b) qualified organizations that serve communities that the  
9       director determines have the greatest need for homeless services;  
10      and

11      (2) the director may give preference to qualified organizations  
12      to achieve a fair distribution, as determined by the director, among  
13      homeless veterans in different geographical regions.

14      d. Low income veterans who **[are]** also **[disabled]** have a  
15      disability shall receive preference over other eligible veterans in  
16      selection for assistance under the pilot program.

17      e. Grant awards under the pilot program shall be used to  
18      **[modify and]** rehabilitate the primary residences of eligible  
19      veterans, to purchase and rehabilitate abandoned homes, including  
20      homes that have been foreclosed, and for other purposes necessary  
21      to advance **[this goal]** these goals, as permitted by the director.  
22      Permitted uses of grant funding shall include, but shall not be  
23      limited to:

24      (1) installing wheelchair ramps, widening exterior and interior  
25      doors, reconfiguring and re-equipping bathrooms to enhance  
26      accessibility, removing doorway thresholds, and installing  
27      appropriate floor coverings to accommodate the functional  
28      limitations that result from having a disability;

29      (2) rehabilitating homes that are in a state of interior or exterior  
30      disrepair; and

31      (3) installing energy efficient features or equipment if the  
32      eligible veteran's monthly residential utility costs are greater than  
33      five percent of monthly household income, and an energy audit of  
34      the residence indicates that the installation of energy efficient  
35      features or equipment would reduce utility costs by 10 percent or  
36      more.

37      f. No qualified organization shall be awarded more than  
38      \$400,000 through the pilot program in any one fiscal year. A  
39      qualified organization receiving a grant shall contribute a matching  
40      contribution in an amount not less than 50 percent of the grant  
41      award. This matching requirement may be met through cash  
42      contributions, or in-kind contributions, as permitted by the director.  
43      Eligible veterans benefitting from the pilot program shall not pay an  
44      application fee or any other cost for the work completed on their  
45      residence, unless a modest fee can be charged, as permitted by the  
46      director, without forcing the veteran's total monthly housing costs  
47      to exceed 30 percent of total household income.

1 g. (1) The director shall provide an annual report to the  
2 Governor, and the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of  
3 P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), presenting the following  
4 information with respect to the associated year of the pilot program:

5 (a) the number of eligible veterans provided assistance under  
6 the pilot program;

7 (b) the socioeconomic characteristics of the benefited veterans;

8 (c) the total number, types, and locations of qualified  
9 organizations offered grant funding under the pilot program;

10 (d) the amount of matching funds, and form of in-kind  
11 contributions raised with each grant;

12 (e) a description of the housing rehabilitation [and  
13 modification] services provided, costs saved, and actions taken  
14 under the pilot program;

15 (f) a description of the outreach initiatives implemented to  
16 educate the general public and qualified organizations about the  
17 pilot program, and to identify eligible veterans and their families;  
18 and

19 (g) a description of compensation offered to workers employed  
20 through the pilot program, and a certification that workers have not  
21 been paid less than the prevailing wage rate for the worker's craft or  
22 trade, as determined by the Commissioner of Labor and Workforce  
23 Development pursuant to P.L.1963, c.150 (C.34:11-56.25 et seq.).

24 (h) any other information that the director considers relevant in  
25 assessing the pilot program.

26 (2) Not later than six months following completion of the pilot  
27 program, the director shall provide another report to the Governor,  
28 and the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164  
29 (C.52:14-19.1), presenting information necessary to assess the  
30 success of the pilot program as a whole.

31 (cf: P.L.2017, c.258, s.3)

32  
33 3. This act shall take effect immediately.  
34  
35

#### 36 STATEMENT

37  
38 This bill would amend the "New Jersey Housing Assistance for  
39 Veterans Act," P.L.2017, c.258 (C.52:27D-516 et seq.) to expand  
40 the purposes of the pilot program established by that act to include  
41 the purchase and rehabilitation of abandoned homes for homeless  
42 veterans. Currently, the pilot program established by this law  
43 authorizes grants to eligible nonprofit organizations to rehabilitate  
44 existing primary residences of disabled or low-income veterans.

45 Under the bill, a nonprofit veterans' organization that has  
46 experience in rehabilitating housing for homeless veterans, or  
47 others, would be eligible to receive a grant to purchase and  
48 rehabilitate abandoned homes for homeless veterans. The bill

1 would afford a preference in awarding grants to nonprofit  
2 organizations that serve communities that are in the greatest need of  
3 homeless services. The bill would allow the administrator of the  
4 current pilot program to give preferences in awarding grants in  
5 order to achieve a fair distribution among homeless veterans in  
6 different geographical regions of the State.

7 Finally, this bill adjusts the existing law, through defining  
8 “rehabilitation” and other language changes, to clarify that pilot  
9 program funds may be expended for a broad range of project types,  
10 including repairs, renovations, reconstruction, as well as the  
11 installation of appropriate new fixtures and other alterations.